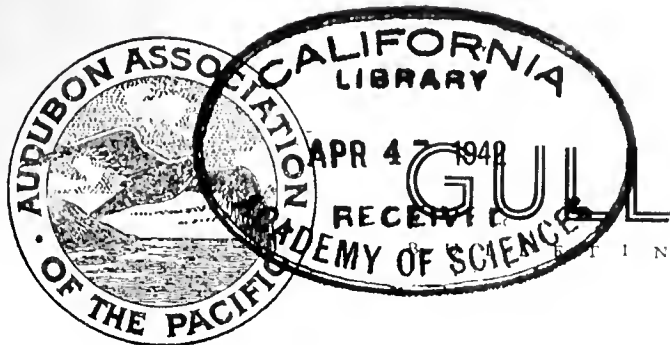


# THE

MONTHLY



VOLUME 24

SAN FRANCISCO, APRIL, 1942

NUMBER 4

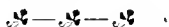
## Birds in the War Zone

The New York Times Magazine of December 7, 1941, quotes some interesting items concerning the effects of war on the bird population of Europe. The birds seem to take little note of actual warfare. Cranes were seen by pilots migrating as usual 11,500 feet above lines of battle. Indeed, some that flew lower were shot by over-enthusiastic anti-aircraft gunners. A surgeon at a field hospital in France in May, 1940, told of seeing wrens nesting in a splintered apple tree while bombing went on.

The sea-birds, also, seem indifferent to the unusual noises of war. "Ducks, cormorants, grebes, loons, gulls—they didn't seem to mind at all. The terrible thing is the oil," said a young Dutch ornithologist. Wherever a ship sinks, large quantities of oil float on the surface of the ocean. This coagulates into tarry masses and sheets which play havoc with the feathers of the swimming and diving birds. They are unable to use their wings and are washed upon the beaches dead or dying.

There is one contradictory story concerning the hearing of birds. It has happened several times that people in the Listening Posts in England have observed large flocks of gulls flying inland just before they heard the sound of enemy planes approaching. Why they do so is certainly a subject for discussion, and there is plenty of opportunity for difference of opinion! On the side of birds having an especially keen sense of hearing and noticing sounds inaudible to human ears there is another story. It was established during the last war that pheasants gave voice lustily in response to the roar of the Battle of Jutland before people even knew the battle was in progress. Perhaps by gathering a series of such observations we may increase our knowledge.

—Dorothy Welch Blanks, Berkeley, California.



## Treatment of An Oiled Murre

On the evening of November 23, 1941, my husband picked up an oiled Murre (*Uria aalge*) on Carmel Beach. "Murrey's" breast and belly were so thickly coated with tar that it formed a sort of armor plate, as firm as the surface of a paved road. There were other gobs of oil on the back of his head and the ends of some of his wing feathers.

We spent a couple of hours that evening cleaning the major part of the oil from his feathers. I tore old rags into countless swabs about three inches square; flannel or spun rayon stuff with a nap seemed better for this than smooth muslins. We dipped these swabs in the cheapest grade of salad oil (left over from slick-making on Albatross trips) and stroked the tar-plate with them, rubbing with the feathers, and discarding the swab as soon as soiled. When most of the crude-oil had been removed, and what remained was softened and well mixed with vegetable oil we swabbed with a strong solution of "drefit" instead of oil, and finally rinsed the bird in clear warm water.

At the end of all this Murrey was in a state of such exhaustion that we half expected that we would not be able to save him despite having removed most of the oil. We warmed him on a hot water bottle and dried him under a goose-necked desk-lamp. We force-fed him raw shrimp, pulped and made into a thin gruel with salted water. For a feeder we broke the tip from a good-sized medicine dropper to make the hole large enough to admit coarse matter and then healed the broken edge in a gas flame. The dropper had to be rammed well down his gullet, and even then a great deal of the food was shaken out after feeding.

It is interesting that the Murre never showed any fear of either people or dogs as newly captive land birds do. (Was this perhaps because we are not enemies to reckon with at sea and on remote off-shore rocks?)

After a day of force-feeding I made the following notes on November 25: 8:30 a.m.—Force-fed with strips of beef liver cut to about the size of a minnow, using the medicine dropper as a ram. 10 a.m.—Murrey swallowed a strip of liver that I had forced into the fore part of his mouth. After this he pecked at food on my lap after he had shaken it from his bill, but did not seize it. Force-fed him three more pieces. 12 m.—Took six strips of moistened liver from my fingers. No force-feeding necessary. 2 p.m.—Walked from far side of cage while I dangled liver and called "Murrey, Murrey." Eagerly ate ten pieces of liver.

Soon Murrey was begging like a young bird and taking food directly from a jar of water. During the next months he ate raw beef, pig, and lamb liver, beef heart, mackerel, sole, cod, smelt, shark or any fish that was cheapest at the wharf.

We later cleaned off the remnants of oil we had missed the first time, using ivory flakes instead of drefit, which had seemed a little strong. Every few days Murrey took a swim in the bathtub. Getting wet seemed to encourage his preening; we had had him for some time before he made any attempt to preen.

After three months, Murrey's feathers still showed a tendency to get wet when he thrashed about in the tub for a long time, and his feet seemed to be suffering from living on newspapers, the skin of the webs getting shrivelly and sloughing off as though sunburned. A wetting cured this condition temporarily, but I was afraid that it might result in a permanent injury if we continued to keep him out of the sea. So on February 25th we released him at Stillwater Cove. Murrey swam strongly away under water. He came up some ten feet away from me, and then repeatedly dived and came up farther out at sea. At our last sight of him, he looked as though he might be attempting to take flight. Murrey wore band No. 38-663085; I hope it won't be turned in for a long, long time.

While I am not entirely sure of the final and complete success of our method of treatment, I do feel that it was at least on the right track. I plan to try the same thing again. I should be inclined to use mild soapsuds another time instead of drefit. I hope other salvagers will find even better and simpler methods of dealing with the oiled bird problem.

—Abbie Lou Williams, Carmel, California.



### February Field Trip

The February field trip on Sunday, the 8th, was one with many exciting and thrilling incidents. Following a long period of rainy and unsettled weather, Sunday turned out to be a beautiful day, ideal for birding and hiking. The group met at the old Manzanita Station, Marin County, about 9 a.m. There we learned that the Tomales Bay road was closed due to slide conditions. After some discussion it was decided that we drive along Bolinas Bay to Point Reyes.

On this route many American Egrets, Great Blue Herons, Canvas-back Ducks, Red-winged Blackbirds and Meadowlarks were noted. The Farallon Islands could be seen distinctly without the aid of binoculars. Not being permitted to use binoculars toward the coast proved a handicap, for it was often difficult to estab-

lish the identity of a bird. At Bolinas Bay a flock of thirty-eight Black Brant was seen, as well as Golden-eyes, Eared and Pied-billed Grebes, Pacific Loons, Surf Scoters, and Cormorants. Farther along, the Common and Red-throated Loons, White-winged Scoters, Western Grebes, Coots, Belted Kingfishers, and three species of gulls—Glaucous-winged, Western, and California were seen.

Near Marshall another flock of thirty-one Black Brant was observed. Three Buffle-heads drew a lot of attention at this time. Many Monarch Butterflies were seen in the vicinity. Good observation resulted in locating a Wood Pewee perched on the top of a redwood tree.

At Point Reyes Mr. and Mrs. Arthur H. Myer and their party joined the group and we proceeded to Dillon's Beach where luncheon was to be eaten. At the entrance to Dillon's Beach the Army stopped us and investigated. Miss Blake produced a pass which had been issued to the Audubon Club. After much deliberation, six carloads of Audubon members and guests were allowed to continue down to the resort. There we were questioned again, and finally received permission to go down to the beach and eat luncheon and "bird" in certain designated areas. Binoculars were trained on us as we ate and talked and compared notes. After luncheon the group walked along the shore to the cove.

This walk was full of thrills. Ravens were observed. Many Snowy Plovers were in evidence on the beach. Mr. Newell Nelson found an Eared Grebe that had been left behind by a wave, and we all enjoyed a good close-up of it. Later, we placed the Eared Grebe in sufficient water for it to propel its partly webbed feet and watched the bird swim away, preening and fluffing itself. The biggest thrill came when a flock of several hundred Black Brant flew so low and close that their markings could be seen plainly with the naked eye. Then in the near distance we saw several thousand Black Brant flying. Sunday was truly a Black Brant day!

A soldier's kindness to an oil-soaked Murre did not go unnoticed, for we were glad to learn that a soldier had taken the time and interest to wash the oil from a Murre.

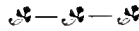
Everyone enjoyed the trip immensely and we were reluctant to disband at 3:30 p.m. Miss Danz reported that she observed eight Long-billed Curlews on the road to Petaluma between Sonoma and Marin Counties; also, Miss MacIver's party reported observing Cedar Waxwings.

The list of sixty-seven species seen on this trip is as follows:

Common Loon	Virginia Rail	Bewick Wren
Pacific Loon	Coot	Tule Wren
Red-throated Loon	Snowy Plover	Robin
Eared Grebe	Long-billed Curlew	Hermit Thrush
Western Grebe	Glaucous-winged Gull	Western Bluebird
Pied-billed Grebe	Western Gull	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
White Pelican	California Gull	Pipit
Brown Pelican	Burrowing Owl	Cedar Waxwing
Farallon Cormorant	Allen Hummingbird	Shrike
Great Blue Heron	Belted Kingfisher	Myrtle Warbler
American Egret	Red-shafted Flicker	Audubon Warbler
American Bittern	Black Phoebe	Meadowlark
Black Brant	Say Phoebe	Red-winged Blackbird
Canvas-back	Wood Pewee	Brewer Blackbird
Lesser Scaup	Coast Jay	House Finch
American Golden-eye	California Jay	Spotted Towhee
Buffle-head	Raven	Brown Towhee
White-winged Scoter	Crow	Junco
Surf Scoter	Chickadee	White-crowned Sparrow
Ruddy Duck	Plain Titmouse	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Turkey Vulture	Bush-tit	Song Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Wren-tit	House Sparrow
Sparrow Hawk		



Members attending were Misses MacIver, Danz, Blake, Webb, Watanabe; Mr. and Mrs. Myer and Messrs. Heyneman and Kirker; and twenty-one guests. —Misaye Watanabe, Historian.



## Audubon Notes

**April Meeting:** The regular meeting will be held on Thursday, the 9th, at 8 p.m., in the Assembly Room, San Francisco Public Library, Larkin and McAllister Streets, San Francisco.

Mrs. Dorothy Dean Sheldon will show her colored motion picture "Wing Flashes" depicting California birds in their native habitats.



**April Field Trip** will be taken on Sunday, the 12th, to McCoy Ranch, on the Arroyo Mocho Road, via Livermore. Dr. T. Eric Reynolds will lead. We are unable to charter a bus and will travel by private car or by the regular Greyhound bus leaving Fifth and Mission Streets, San Francisco, at 6:40 and 9 a.m. (some twenty minutes later from the Oakland Station). Buy a round trip ticket to Livermore, \$1.10 and tax. If traveling by bus advise Miss Frances J. Blake, 1505 Holly Street, Berkeley, or at the regular evening meeting, to arrange for transportation between Livermore and the ranch. Bring luncheon.



**March Meeting:** The 294th regular meeting was held on the 12th in the Assembly Room of the San Francisco Public Library, with forty-four members and guests present. First Vice-President Mrs. Enid K. Austin, presided.

Mr. E. L. Bickford of Napa, a member since April 10, 1918, passed away in September, 1941.

The following resolution presented by Mr. Joseph J. Webb, was passed by a unanimous vote of the assembly, and returned to the Board of Directors for further approval:

WHEREAS, the constitution and by-laws of the Audubon Association of the Pacific fail to provide any method for the selection and appointment of a member to any office vacated due to resignation or inability to act,

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Directors be and they are hereby authorized to select and appoint, in its discretion at any regular or special meeting, any member to any vacated office due to resignation or inability to act, and said member so selected and appointed shall hold office during the remainder of the year in which the vacancy occurs, or until a successor is selected.



Mr. Brighton C. Cain entertained those present with an account of the birds that have actually been seen at Diamond Boy Scout Camp, Oakland, as well as those birds that have come tantalizingly near the camp but so far have not been actually seen within its boundaries. As usual, Mr. Cain fully illustrated his talk by showing many bird skins, some bird houses, books on the subject and last, but not least, gave excellent imitations of bird calls and songs.

## Audubon Association of the Pacific

Organized January 25, 1917

### For the Study and the Protection of Birds

President.....	Mr. David G. Nichols.....	1710 Grant St., Berkeley
Corresponding Secretary.....	Mr. Joseph J. Webb.....	519 California St., San Francisco
Treasurer.....	Miss Ivander MacIver.....	2414 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley
Editor.....	Mrs. T. Eric Reynolds.....	140 Estates Drive, Piedmont

Monthly meeting second Thursday, 8 p.m.

Assembly Room, San Francisco Public Library, Larkin and McAllister Streets, San Francisco.

Membership dues, payable January 1st, \$3.00 per year.

Student memberships, \$1.50 per year.

Life memberships, \$50.00.

Members are responsible for dues until written notice of resignation is received by Treasurer.